

HERE'S SOME ATTITUDE



A few straight-out assertions about the twisted world we live in, from one anarchist's perspective.

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IT'S ALL GOING HORRIBLY WRONG

There are loads of different things that are all wrong with the world at the same time. They feed into each other in intricate ways and create a big messy global problem that can't be fixed a bit at a time. We have to take a step back, look at the whole thing in a different light and then do things differently in some basic ways.

EVERYONE IS A MISFIT IN THIS WORLD

Walking round this city you might feel like a round peg in a square hole but let me tell you they don't make pegs that fit the holes in this place. People go to such lengths trying to mutate to fit the world we live in but it can't be done.

We're dependent on relationships with other people for our health and happiness, yet we live in a world where we're suspicious or afraid of everyone we see every day except for a small number of mates and our immediate family. No wonder people get a bit weird.

We're expected to be the kind of person who is able to get up at the same time every day and sit in a car surrounded by hundreds of revving engines for half an hour without wanting to throttle someone. Then go and sit in a square box and do the same thing we did yesterday for 8 hours. And even smile about it.

We're born with an instinct for what's poisonous and what's edible (that's how we've made it this far as species). Some of the food that's available to us now - like fast food burgers or artificial sweeteners - is so unhealthy that people get ill and eventually die from it, yet it's deliberately done up in a way that appeals to us and looks tasty. We're expected to survive and be healthy in this kind of world.

The way we make ourselves beautiful is to completely change how we look and smell. The whole thing is so twisted and wrong, there's no way we can possibly change enough to be an integrated part of this society. As humans, we're all automatically excluded.

THERE IS A BETTER CULTURE

The official lifestyle is terrible: loads of dull work and hardly any life. The ads make it look glamorous but it's not. There is a better culture though, and you're probably part of it.

People need each other and our culture celebrates life and the time we spend together. We get most of our happiness from just being together and we share what we've got among us.

It's hard to remember that this culture even exists when the TV tells us not to trust our neighbours and just to buy things all the time. It's even harder to recognise that it's the world we carry round inside us, that we escaped into as kids. It's the real world, though, and the bleak world of feeling alone and hating everyone is actually fake and has to be recreated by despair and television every day.

Sometimes the bravest thing is admitting you don't have all the answers.



HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD

If things aren't radically different afterwards, it's not a revolution, it's just a change of government.

If we want to live in a world where people live and work together instead of always being pitted against one another in the fight for survival, then our work has to always be about building that world. There are all kinds of co-operative set-ups that people have refined over the years and are using now to great effect. Some people get cheap food by all putting in and buying in bulk from a distributor. Some people live all together in big groups to make land and housing more affordable. Lots of simple things like sharing cars or other expensive equipment goes on all the time. All these things are directly creating the things we want right now for ourselves. That's community organising.

Deciding things and acting on them in our own community, we soon go beyond what we're allowed to do by law. Some people illegally collect perfectly good food that the supermarkets have thrown out and share it out with whoever wants it. Some people move into abandoned buildings illegally and use them for community space where people can do things that aren't shopping. These things grow into real freedom when they start to provide a lot of our needs without reliance on the state and establishment.

Most of the work involved in building this freedom is just organising - setting up social systems, communicating with people, making changes to meet people's needs, holding events. It's not very glamorous but it has the satisfaction of seeing something you've created working in front of your eyes.

The state will attack our organisations and persecute us for our activities. That's to be expected. The best defence we can have is that our work is useful to and supported by the community we live in. Defending our freedom might come to an actual fight, eventually. That's not our choice and we can't escape it if the state brings it on us. We have to set out creating a better society and aiming to win without a fight, though. If we focus on the fight, we lose sight of the future we're trying to create, and then we've got no chance.

ANARCHY IS JUST THE OPPOSITE OF HIERARCHY

On the one hand there is hierarchy - a situation where some have power over others. It includes:

Monarchy - power comes back ultimately to one person

Oligarchy - a small number of people hold the power

Patriarchy - men have power over others

Matriarchy - women have power over others

Similarly:

Plutocracy - the rich have the power

Theocracy - religious leaders have the power

Meritocracy - people earn positions of power by their qualifications and achievements

Bureaucracy - officials who administer the system have the power

The opposite of that is anarchy.

No-one has power over others and all people are equal. Rules and decisions are made by agreement among everyone instead of being enforced from above.

The two are often switched around in news reports etc. For example in the aftermath of a war, not anarchy but **hierarchy** runs rampant, with armed men holding a lot of power while children, mothers, the sick and injured and other vulnerable people are subjugated.

Anarchy is obviously an ideal, which is never fully realised, like peace and justice. It's something to always work towards.

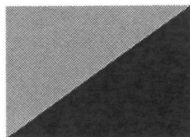
Democracy - the people collectively have the power. Because the power is held by everyone, democracy is arguably not a hierarchy at all but another word for anarchy. Some people also use the word when they really mean Representative Democracy, which is a watered down democracy that makes big concessions to bureaucracy (and also, inevitably, plutocracy).



A is for anarchy



The black flag
symbolises no flag
- no government



The anti-fascist flag
is red and
black



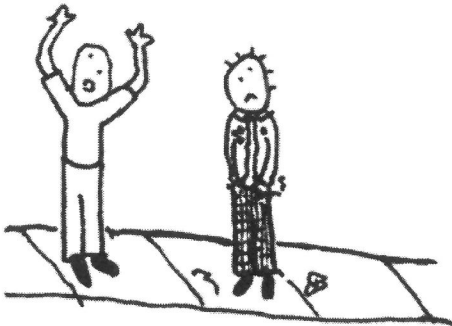
Circle-A combined with
the anti-nuke symbol

ANARCHISM IS JUST A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

Anarchism as a social movement arose in the 19th century along with socialism, communism and lots of other branches of the general upsurge in idealism and people's action for justice and a better life. We owe most of the comforts and rights we enjoy today to that diverse collection of activists and rebels who struggled in every generation for a better deal for ordinary people. Along this broad spectrum of progressive ideas, anarchism is characterised by a focus on autonomous community organising and a rejection of the state as a ruler over our lives, even for our own protection.

Most branches of people's organising have taken up arms against their oppressors at some time or another, or at least advocated it. Anarchists' reputation for violence comes partly from occasions where the anarchists continued to advocate armed uprising after the socialists had changed to an electoral or other strategy. Anarchists' outright rejection of the validity of nation states is also an easy target for accusations of extremism by people in power.

Current anarchist culture in Western societies is focussed particularly on a few things like the anti-democratic nature of "free trade" economics, solidarity with people's international struggles against oppression and immediate things in our lives like police brutality and the privatisation of public space and property. It tends to be an "everything at once" activist culture so



oh i get it! anarchy
means that you litter

people try to actively tackle sexism, racism and homophobia, fight the animal exploitation industry, challenge conformist body images and rebel against both the culture of frying your brain on drugs and the oppression of obeying drug laws, all while organising politically free spaces and community groups.

POLITICIANS LIE - AND NEWSPAPERS PRINT THEM

News reporters in the press and on TV can be reprimanded for telling you news that isn't true but it's OK for them to say "The minister said ..." even if they know full well that the minister was lying like a demon. With that in mind, you can mentally delete all the bits of the news that are probably not true. It's alarming how little remains.



By filling up their articles with that sort of non-information, and then repeating the few facts they do have a few times in different ways, they manage to avoid having to print any of the information we'd like to know about what's going on in the world.

There's no point getting too upset about this - it's just the way things are. Most of our big media are totally dependent on advertising income so their content is designed to please their biggest advertising customers. You might think that when you buy a newspaper you're the customer. The way the news companies see it is that the customers are the advertising clients. The company sells you, the newspaper reader, to its customers. (This insight came to me from a wise American writer called Noam Chomsky.)



THE U.S.A. OPPOSES DEMOCRACY

The United States government lies outright when it claims to take action in support of democracy. The U.S. regime was a threat to independent democracies for much of the 20th Century and has not improved so far in this new century. Wars in the interest of US economic interests are dressed up as humanitarian campaigns or defeating "communists" while other dictators are overlooked, supported or even helped into power by US funds, armaments and training.

It is not simply a matter of over-enthusiastic idealists, misguided do-gooders and self-centred entrepreneurs. There is a ruthless and cynical empire at the centre of the administration, desperately clinging to fading power and trying to push the world into line with its own ugly plans. We have no trust in the motives or actions of the US government in anything it undertakes.

In 1951, the CIA organised a coup and overthrew the elected government in Guatemala, installing a dictator friendly to the USA. In Iran in 1953, the "communist threat" was the nationalisation of oil fields. Along with the UK, France and the Netherlands, the USA overthrew the government and split the oil profits among the victors.

In 1963 in the Dominican Republic, a US-friendly dictator was assassinated and an election was held. A popular president was elected, then deposed by a military coup. The US supported the new dictator and helped put down a democratic uprising.

In 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down and the USSR collapsed, the USA was nowhere to be seen. It played no part in the popular uprisings nor did it give more than token support to the new democracies that emerged afterwards.

In the following countries, the USA has supported coups and dictators or simply attacked the country for its own gain in the past century: Guatemala, Granada, Panama, Costa Rica, The Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Colombia, Indonesia, East Timor, The Philippines, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkey, Greece, Palestine, Vietnam, Korea.

WAR IS ABOUT GREED AND EMPIRE

While we can debate the possibility of a "just" or "necessary" war, governments are using our uneducated teenagers to carry out despicable political acts. The stories they tell us to explain their decisions are lies. Both Gulf wars and many others were started for economic reasons.

War is a constant threat backing up powerful nations as they enter trade talks with small economies. To giant corporations and the governments under their influence, the horrific devastation of war is just a tool they use to put pressure on a nation that is resisting outside control of its economy. Knowing that governments like ours are ruthless enough to go to war just for economic gain, small countries are limited in how much they can resist making big economic concessions.

Arms manufacturers make huge amounts of money out of war. They also make large political donations. (It makes me want to vomit.) Resisting war is an essential part of working towards a just and sustainable global economic system. Without war to punish their attempts at sovereignty, small nations can better resist the power of multinational corporations to make them conform. People in a lot of places are ready to take democratic control back over their countries and economies if only the threat of military retribution from global bullies can be removed.

To Arms!

**Capitalists. Parsons. Politicians.
Landlords. Newspaper Editors and
Other Stay-At-Home Patriots.**

**your country needs
YOU
in the trenches!!**

WORKERS

Follow your Masters

THERE'S NO NEED FOR NATIONS

Most nations were only formed out of sprawling feudal empires quite recently (as late as the 1870s). Australia wasn't a nation until 1901. Many large nation states today, for example Russia, China and Indonesia, still feel more like empires than countries. An elite minority based around the capital dominates the way things work and exploits peasants in the outlying areas.

Have you ever looked at a map of Africa and wondered why there were so many straight lines? In the late 19th century, lines were drawn on the map to create "nations" so that European powers could divide the continent among themselves, largely ignoring the relationships between different groupings of people who already lived there, or else exploiting existing rivalries. This 'Scramble for Africa' fed the demand for more minerals and other resources in Europe following the industrial revolution. (With this history, the state of so many African countries today is hardly surprising.)

In the capitalist system, money can travel freely across borders while people are increasingly hemmed in, especially if they happen to have been born in a poor country (and who can help where they were born?). The USA polices its border with Mexico fiercely to prevent 'illegal immigration', but is happy to send American companies into Mexico for manufacturing where it can exploit cheap labour and lax environmental standards in the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Similarly, Australia has among the harshest immigration policies in the world and strongly discourages immigrants from neighbouring countries, but presses for the right to send Australian companies to extract minerals all over the Pacific. Without borders, the exploited people could just move to the country where all their money has gone and get some of it back. Border security prevents that natural balancing out and helps maintain the injustices of the system.

Creating a unified national identity often happens at the expense of some groups living in the area of land the nation covers. Any large country is likely to contain a lot of different ethnic and cultural groups, and if it's not convenient for the image of the nation, their culture can be marginalised. This happens to nomadic people especially. Roma gypsies in Europe, for example, are seldom welcomed in any country. And what place do Aboriginals have in Aussie identity?

REFUGEES ARE OUR PEOPLE

When newspapers and politicians whine about a "refugee crisis", they're lying to us. The rate at which refugees are arriving is just not a crisis. We can well afford to be as generous and welcoming as we would instinctively like to be.

Governments try to whip up fear about refugees so they can get away with being nasty to them. They want us all to be nationalist and racist so we'll go along with their stupid ideas if they make up a foreign threat for us to be scared of. Meanwhile they look after the interests of their business-class friends in other governments ahead of ordinary people in their own country.

It's in the interests of all ordinary people to be welcoming to refugees. Opposing repression and persecution overseas helps to maintain our freedoms here. The people fleeing persecution are also often people involved in freedom and justice campaigns in their own countries and may have very useful things to teach us here.

Locking up refugees in prisons is actually just continuing their persecution and is a sign of our government playing along with the repressive regimes these people are escaping from. Their treatment is far worse than real prisoners - they have no fixed sentence or end date to look forward to, their access to lawyers and translators is so difficult that a lot of them never manage to speak to anyone and the guards are often racist thugs that get away with abuse. Children are also treated this way. Refugees are also moved from prison to prison without notice or good reason, making it difficult for anyone to find out where they are and visit them or give them any support.

Governments also try out new forms of oppression on refugees and other people they've taught us to hate, before spreading it to include all of us. Standing up for the rights of refugees is standing up for ourselves in the long run.

Right to copy: You're invited to copy and change this zine as much as you like. It's laid up in Scribus, using fonts "Bitstream Vera Serif" and "Georgia", if you want to match up new bits with old. Contact me if you like, on mr.paul.spencer@gmail.com

HEAD IN THE CLOUDS (or head in the sand?)

That system will never work! You're dreaming mate. In fact, it's failing already, right in front of our eyes. The system we've got fails spectacularly every day. It fails to feed and house a lot of people. It fails to make us happy and free. It fails to protect the environment for the future. It fails to value our lives as individual, unrepeatable experiences that must be enjoyed while we've got them.

So let's try something that might not work either, but might too, and is at least fairer and freer, if more work. It involves organising our own lives outside of what the rich people want us to do. We haven't got the failsafe solution to all the world's problems but the leaders are clearly not getting anywhere and at least we're having a go. If you don't take some control and actually live your life instead of just watching it happen to you, you might as well be dead.

DON'T OPPRESS YOURSELF

Having a free space inside your own head where you're not afraid to express what you're really like is the bare minimum for survival. You must be able to think any thought that enters your head, turn it over, even hold it as an opinion if you want to, without telling yourself off for it.

You don't have to be perfect, you don't even have to be right. You can still totally be an OK person even though you screw up sometimes and there are things about yourself that you're not happy with.

If you can rely on yourself to be supportive, you can survive the outside world a lot better. Politicians and corporate execs rely on you oppressing yourself to save them the effort and expense. They hope that a few high-profile cases of blatant oppression will be enough to make the rest of us keep our heads down. If we do, they've got away with it pretty easy. It's important that we all keep giving them stick at a time like this.

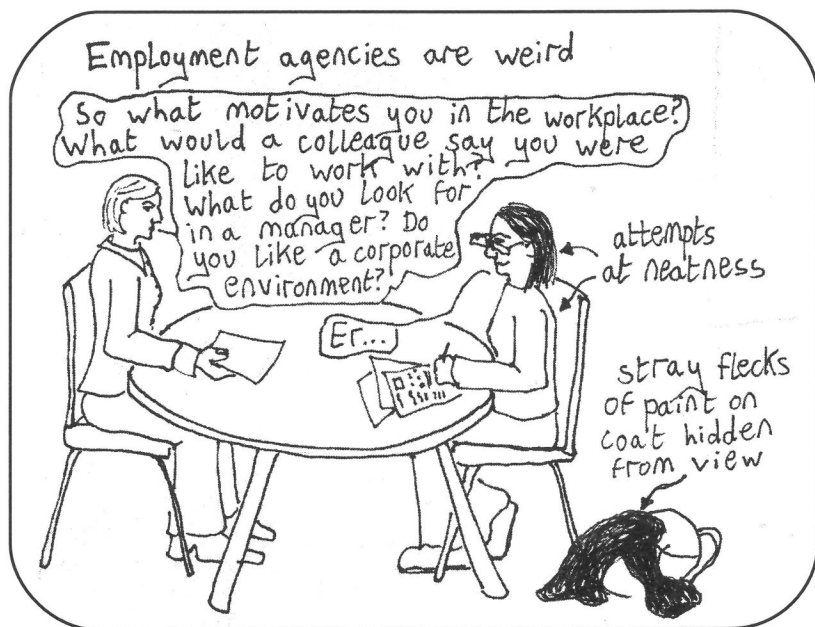
WE ALL WANT INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY

First of all, it's just automatic to wish good luck to anyone who is trying to live outside the control of their national government - especially one that's imposed by a colonial power. As well as that, the social and legal changes it would take to win indigenous sovereignty would be good for everyone who aspires to freedom.

The government in Australia has always refused to concede any autonomy or sovereignty to indigenous people. Right from the landing of the First Fleet, the policy has always been to claim the entire continent for England. When the colonial government wanted to declare the land as uninhabited (*Terra Nullius*), the English parliament rejected it as clearly illegal but the colonial governors adopted it regardless. The English turned a blind eye to the outrage.

Since then, the official treatment of indigenous people has varied from declarations of intended genocide to placation on the dole but the sovereignty of the colonial parliament has always been presumed. Aboriginal people have continued their traditional lives on their lands in parts of Australia, even while the land is used for cattle farming, but their custodianship went unrecognised by the government which only acknowledged the farmers' title deeds. When the 1967 referendum made Aboriginal people citizens of Australia, they were finally allowed to participate in the imposed European culture but the communal, nomadic, resource-conservative aspects of their culture have actually been made gradually more illegal over the decades.

Recent land rights decisions have finally undone the validity of the *Terra Nullius* declaration and opened the way for claims of sovereignty to be made over individual areas of land. The process is complicated and expensive but we wish every case success. The government is working right now to take more land from indigenous people, misusing social research to justify the dispossession. Like in most colonial situations, the big motivation is profit from resources like mining. In this case they want to mine uranium and create a nuclear waste dump. These issues are of concern to everyone in the world.



POVERTY IS POLITICAL

You know that how well-off or poor you are is related to political decisions made at the top. Did you know that a lot of the fatal poverty suffered in the world (including Australia) is also political and mostly avoidable?

Some of it is to do with corruption in the governments of the countries themselves, which seems a bit out of our control (or our governments') but is often actually not. Western European countries and the USA have been responsible for funding and arming right-wing militias to destabilise or even overthrow a democratic government and install a more compliant dictator. Then they turn a blind eye to the corruption while lots of resources are extracted really cheaply. People dread the discovery of oil or valuable minerals in their land because of the violence with which access to the resources is enforced. The governmental systems themselves are also often left over from harsh, oppressive colonial governments installed by Western European and US governments.

Part of it is also to do with foreign ownership of industries in these countries. Multinational companies start enterprises there like manufacturing, mining or even farming. Local people are employed on low wages but they can't afford to buy the things they produce, because the industry owners save them all for richer countries where the profits are higher. (The well-paid experts employed by industries are often imported from somewhere else.) In the case of food, this leads to massive amounts of food being shipped out of countries where people are starving, and into countries where people are obese.

The foreign ownership is now not only encouraged by chats between the former colonial powers and the new dictators, it's enforced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The World Bank funds projects which are meant to be about creating major infrastructure to help a poor nation's economy to grow. The contracts are given to companies based in rich countries and are usually enormous dams or roads or other projects to set up the poor countries for more efficient resource extraction by multinational companies.

The IMF lends money to countries which are short of funds to run their local economies. The conditions of the loans always involve

16 allowing the IMF to restructure the economy along more "free trade" lines, including allowing multinationals to come in and

export everything - as well as (quite cruelly it seems to me) cutting government spending and privatising health, education, public transport and even water and electricity.

The WTO is a body which holds talks specifically about moving the world towards a more "free trade" global economy. It describes the talks as "consensus-based", so any individual country could block any agreement it isn't happy with. In practice, however, the big economies apply so much pressure to the smaller ones with threats of sanctions (and ultimately war), that the outcome is always that the weaker economies are "liberalised" even further while the stronger ones retain their protections, subsidies and tariffs.

In addition to all that, the value of currencies in relation to each other goes up and down according to the whims of investors in currency speculation. This has only been the case since the 1970s, when currencies were delinked from the value of gold. Now, just because a currency's value is low on the world market, it costs them loads to import anything. Yet they still get hardly anything for their exports, because the low price is their only edge in the market. Meanwhile we can import things at unrealistically low prices.

NOT JOINING THE UNION IS PERVERSE

Unionism won't solve all our problems and some unions have got a culture that's very foreign to people like us who are trying to make real deep social changes. Even so, not joining at all is going a bit far. It's like not supporting your team because they haven't won many games lately or you don't like the coach. Only with real-life consequences.

Unions used to be illegal but people joined anyway and risked heavy punishment, even execution. Through struggle, they've gained recognition and won us every dollar of overtime, holiday pay or unemployment benefit we've ever been paid, as well as better conditions. Now they're under attack again - not only our wages and working conditions but even our right to campaign together in a union are threatened by the recent changes to the law.

Some unions also run low-cost loans and other financial services for their members as part of their philosophy of mutual self-help and community building.

A BETTER ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Our current economic system leaves greed as the only way to get anywhere in business. Once listed on the Stock Exchange, a company has to grow constantly to make itself an attractive investment for other greedy investors, otherwise they will sell their shares and the company - while trading perfectly well - will become bankrupt and worthless. Small companies avoid that pressure but are at such a disadvantage through buying smaller quantities of stock that they find it necessary to run their businesses in a totally mercenary and money-grubbing way just to make ends meet.

The government once provided a lot of services at a subsidised price just because they were needed. The privatisation dogma being pushed through in countries all over the world says that not only should private companies be allowed to make a profit out of essential services like water and electricity but that the government should not be allowed to offer those services anymore because it would be unfair on the private companies. A better system would allow private companies to compete with governments if they think they can offer something better or cheaper than the government is providing. That would genuinely give us the benefits of the private sector.

Communist countries have shown us that when all economic activity is controlled by the government, it's dull and horrible and not responsive to what people need or want. Private enterprise allows people to provide things for people around them on a really small scale and make life more interesting and pleasant for their own community. Capitalist countries are now showing us really clearly how that can be taken too far. There are obviously things in our society that should be exempt from the profit focus that private enterprise brings with it. Things like hospitals and schools, for example. Also, if we want to provide ourselves with cheap public transport or electricity etc. using our own tax money, we should be able to do that without interference from greedy private investors. Finally, we need to be able to limit the power of private companies over our lives. It's already hard to go shopping without paying most of our money to a giant multinational company to take out of our local economy and invest in other giant companies. We need to be able to structure our economy so that it serves our
18 needs instead of just making rich, powerful people richer and more powerful.

CAPITALISM IS BAD

Capitalism is more than just free enterprise and an escape from a state-controlled economy. It's the principle of making money out of being rich instead of doing work.. It's unjust on a really basic level. All the money rich people earn form thir inverstments and speculation comes out of our wages and leads to inflation.

Laws about property ownership and finance are set up specially to allow capitalism to be practised unhindered, even when those laws interfere with other more socially beneficial things people want to do, like keeping public space for people to just hang out in for example.

It's not necessarily everyone's position that capitalism should be utterly abolished and banned. Most things that are a bit naughty still carry on to some extent. It's certainly reasonable to demand that capitalism be treated as an antisocial and greedy way to behave and that limitations are put on it to restrict the bad effects it can have on people and society.

An idealistic future is one where the social system we live by is so much geared towards making our lives happy and free that capitalism is kind of irrelevant and has nowhere to get a foothold.



MULTINATIONALS ARE EVIL

It's impossible for a corporation to be genuinely benevolent and "socially responsible" because of a few basic things in their nature and the rules that govern their behaviour.

Corporations exist only to serve their shareholders and only by making big profits. Shareholders can (and do) sue the directors for making a decision that leads to less than the highest possible profits. Instead of existing to do things for the world and make a living along the way, corporations exist for profit and try to appear to be benevolent as part of their marketing strategy.

These days, corporations are treated almost as people and can own property - including shares in other corporations. By now, corporate investors (such as banks) own majority holdings in an enormous number of companies. Profit is everything and compassion is nowhere to be seen.

It's a cut-throat game. In the corporate world, where the Stock Exchange is worshipped, it's impossible to just coast along making a steady income and be happy. A company lives and dies on its reputation as a worthy investment that climbs in value, so it has to expand and take over other companies. If it stops growing, it will crash and be worthless.

Growth and profit leads companies and their lobby groups to constantly pressure the government to reduce our wages and relax the bosses' responsibilities towards us. It also means that companies are expected to use up more resources each year, producing stupid amounts of useless junk to fill the shops with and then try to make us buy it all. It's causing horrendous environmental devastation.

All that makes the investment and Stock Exchange system very unsuitable for running something as sensitive as a human society.

WAL★MART
Low Wages, Low Morals *Always*

SUPERMARKETS ARE REALLY NASTY COMPANIES

Sick of the unpleasant supermarket shopping routine? There are a few good reasons to head back to the small shops and the main street. And on top of it all, supermarkets aren't even cheap!

Supermarkets rip off their suppliers. They set up a deal where their suppliers are producing goods tailored exactly to the supermarket's needs and are no good to anyone else. Then they refuse to pay the agreed price and use their strength to push the price down. Suppliers then screw their workers for even lower wages just to try and survive.

Supermarkets suppress competition. They sell us things at low cost for just long enough to suck us in so the smaller shops are forced to close. Then they laugh in our faces and jack the prices up.

Supermarkets make us poor. For every dollar you spend in a supermarket, a little comes back in wages and other spending and the rest goes to executive salaries and the stock exchange, where it does you and me no good at all. Smaller shops are more likely to spend their earnings in our local economy.

Supermarkets aren't even cheap, in reality. They sell a few things at reduced prices so they look cheap but then make their money back on the rest of their stock. (They don't get rich giving money away you know.)

Some people in cities start food buying groups, ordering things in bulk and splitting them up between them when they arrive. That way they get what they want at lower prices and avoid the over-packaging. Some people also get to know a particular vegetable farmer and set up a relationship where their group commits to buying from that farmer and they get a good price on their vegies. People do this often to support struggling organic farmers and get themselves non-toxic vegetables they can afford. It's a nice thing to be part of.

Some of these groups have grown into co-operative stores where you can just go in and buy unpackaged food at almost wholesale prices.

WORLD
UNITED
SQUASH
THE WTO

TRADE TALKS ARE BAD NEWS

Free Trade is not in our interest - and the fake "free trade" that comes out of the talk-fests is even worse!

"Free Trade" means that there are no restrictions or barriers holding back trade. "Barriers to trade" are regulations that limit what can be traded or how, or who can own things. They include environmental protection, workers' rights, health and safety standards and government regulation of the economy itself.

With no restrictions, any sizeable economy will start to fluctuate wildly, quickly become completely out of control and collapse. It is not a good place to invest. Some regulation of the economy has been in place ever since the first investment crash in the 1700s. In addition, an unrestricted economy is no enjoyable place to run a business, since the most ruthless cut-throat practices are allowable. The black market is a real-life example of a free trade system. No-one is pushing for actual free trade.

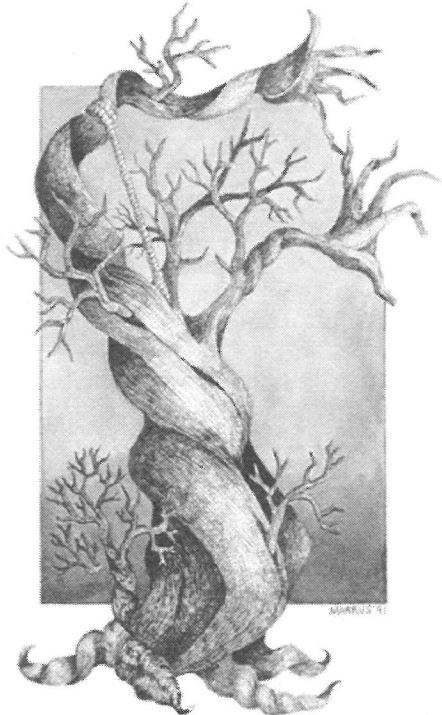
The "Free Trade" agenda being pushed in forums like the World Trade Organisation is not real free trade but just an old-fashioned gang fight, where the strongest get the prizes. A lot of powerful players including national governments, multinational corporations, corporate lobby groups and international lending institutions all weigh in, trying to grab as much as they can. Every type of pressure and threat is applied to the national governments, with each one wanting to get concessions out of the others while giving up nothing themselves. The corporate groups want governments to tighten controls over people while relaxing controls over business and investment. None of them has our interests in mind - to all of them, we're just the source of labour and cash for all their pointless projects.

We nearly had a body to govern world trade whose job was to protect international standards of workers' rights and environmental safeguards but it was blocked by the USA for being too democratic. Lots of good structures like this have been drawn up and are still around. The better future we want to live in isn't as far out of our reach as it sometimes looks.

POLITICIANS NEED US TO FORCE THEM

Politicians are under intense pressure from business lobbyists to just be cynical and greedy, take the bribes and perks and do what the rich people want. To make things worse, the big parties are more and more centrally controlled by a Party Committee, so the honest-looking people we might think we're voting for are held in line by the Party leadership. Even if they went into the game wanting to do something good for people, they find it really difficult to achieve anything.

If we campaign and organise and demand what's right, it adds some pressure in the other direction and can give them the validity they need to get something good done. It takes a lot of work even to get that far but if it turns out our politician is not on our side after all, well the campaign is already underway by then so we're halfway to doing it ourselves, which is even more satisfying.



GLOBAL WARMING: IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

We are already seeing some of the damaging effects of climate change but it's probably not going to wipe out all human life on the planet. Therefore, we need to be ready to carry on living through the difficulties it throws up for us.

We've gone beyond warnings and moved onto reports of how the climate is actually changing. Whether we like it or not, our lives are going to change. We might as well make some of the changes positive ones - and do it as soon as we can. If we move to the kind of co-operative society we'll need to be to survive in the unfamiliar world we're entering, that will encompass all our current campaigns to reduce our climate impacts.

Carbon trading is no help. We need to reduce our CO2 output and it does nothing about that. In the long run a carbon-based economy might be the right thing but the urgent action we need on actual emission levels is totally missing. Catching fumes from coal-fired power stations and burying them underground is another distraction. It's a total fantasy and will be for years to come (if it ever works).

Not changing is not one of the options open to us. We can deny reality and stave things off a bit longer but it only makes it worse in the end. Better to embrace the changes now.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLAN

Even as we witness the destruction of our society, economy and environment, there is no sign of any sensible thoughts being thought in Parliament. From the evidence around us, it seems clear that the rulers of nations all over the world are floundering, with no idea how to respond to the crises we're faced with. They seem to just be hoping nothing really bad happens while they're in power - and relying on the army to sort it out if it does.

We have to prepare ourselves to look after our own communities and sort out our own rescue plans. The more organisations we have already working in our neighbourhoods, the easier it will be to get organised when bad things happen.



IT'S EASY FOR AUTHORITARIANS

They can talk about "abolishing" this and "cracking down" on that and imply that everything will be perfect under their rule. If they're planning to rule the country by force and stifle any opposition to their crazy plans, it's easy to come up with a campaign that sounds like something you would want to believe. They can spout any old garbage and try to link it in with things like "national pride". Then when they're in power, they conjure up all kinds of internal and external threats to "national security" (i.e. their job security) and scare people into consenting to the oppressive changes they want to push through. They do have to overcome people's natural scepticism about that kind of carry-on though, which is all that's saved us so far.

Trying to organise outside that power game, we have to put forward things like "If we made a lot more decisions among ourselves in our own communities instead of having them pushed on us by a national government, we would be better off," or "If we had more control over our own lives and our work had more connection to our own happiness and survival, people would be less miserable and commit less crimes". That's not the stuff to get people all roused up and joining in the fight but it's actually the realistic kind of stuff that anarchists believe.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

When times are hard, getting on with your neighbours is one of the greatest things you can hope for. If the evidence around us adds up to anything at all, there are some pretty hard times ahead of us, so forming a friendship with your neighbours could be a great investment.

In other calamities, neighbourhoods that are close and working together have managed to create little bubbles of "not quite as bad" where people looked after each other and survived better. Along with friends and family, neighbourhood communities are one of the most important connections you can make.

People also manage to get by on a lot less money when they share time and stuff among their neighbourhood. All the old practices like babysitting, veggie gardens and all that really helped people in past generations. We can get it together like that again.

FASCISM GETS IT WRONG

Adolf Hitler observed in his book "Mein Kampf" that in any organisation, no matter how democratically it's organised, there are people who seem to be leaders and other people tend to follow along with what they suggest. It's a valid observation that I've seen myself in lots of organisations I've been part of. His mistake, and that of fascists generally, is to decide that we should therefore structure our whole society to encourage and revere that tendency in people.

To be seen as a leader and followed by others in a small group, a person needs a lot of knowledge about the decision being made as well as a generally intelligent outlook on the world. They also need to understand where other people are coming from and be able to make suggestions that will be agreeable to many people. Instead of understanding that and encouraging leaders to share their knowledge and insights to the benefit of the whole group, fascists just hold up those people as "special" people who "deserve" to lead and are in some way "above" others.

Those characteristics that help someone rise to a leadership position aren't necessarily the ones that make a good leader. Several people in a group might have those traits and the one who comes out on top is the one who can shout the loudest and belittle anyone who disagrees. That takes an understanding of the people involved but is a highly inappropriate skill for a good leader of a society.

It is a characteristic of fascism that the leaders set themselves up as "natural" or "proper" leaders in some way and thereby discourage criticism of their decisions or challenges to their leadership from below. They use the same mindset to help portray any opponents to their regime as lower beings that may be mistreated or killed with little remorse. The regime fits in well with nationalism and racism.

It also fits in well with an unfettered capitalist economy. Fascism has been renamed "corporatism" on occasions because it is such a business-friendly form of oppressive government. In fascist Germany, Italy and Greece, capitalist business carried on as normal even during the war. The so-called defenders of democracy were still carrying on normal trading relations with Hitler's regime right up to the Second World War. An economic sanction might have prevented the war altogether but it was never even tried.

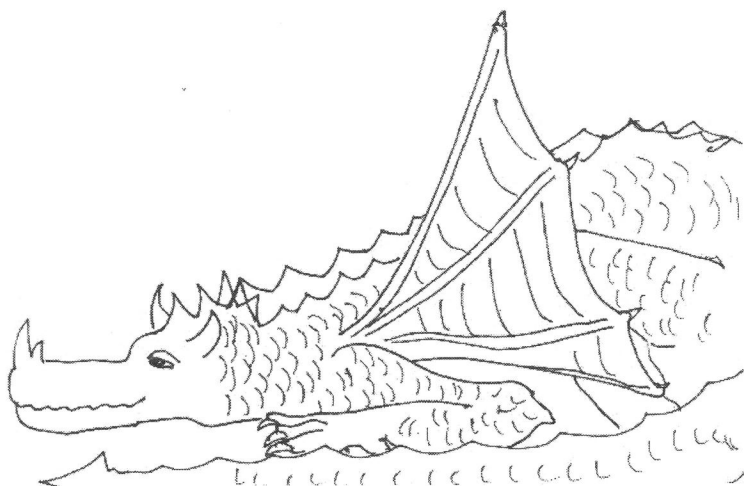
BEWARE OF SUICIDE!

If you're young - and a young man especially, watch your back. Suicide is out to get you. It's one of the most common ways for young men to die in this successful and affluent country.

There's no doubt that it's a hard life in this society. And men definitely find it harder to spit out the difficulties in any useful ways (like explaining to someone what hurts and how, or just crying at home). If you can make it to your mid-20s, though, you'll probably be OK after that.

The worst danger is the time when you're a teenager and you're still not that good at handling being you - not that happy in your own self. At the same time it's really starting to hit you just how unfriendly this system is. As you get older, you find yourself more able to just be yourself and be cheerful about it. You also start to feel a bit of strength in the way people around you manage to live through the nasty life we've got ourselves tangled in.

So take care. The suicide bug is floating around everywhere, looking for a hold in your brain. Remember that life gets better. Look at people who manage to be happy and have a healthy attitude to life and try to work out what they do or believe that keeps them alive. Being active helps too - doing things just for fun or for your own good and being a kid again.



WHY NOT GIVE UP?

Giving up doesn't help. It doesn't even make things easier for ourselves. Rulers will always get slowly worse and worse until we stop them. In the last century, we've seen some pretty horrific extremes of what bad leaders can be like.

Justice isn't handed out for nothing, we have to work for it and build it. That's the way things are, there's no escaping it. It's just basic maintenance of our society.

Working for positive change is really enjoyable. It makes us happy to be part of an ancient and continuing movement of people who want things to be nicer and better for everyone and who give our time and effort to working together to achieve good things.

THE WORLD IS REBELLING

All over the world, people are organising against the oppressive effects of the heartless global economic system on their lives. We might think we're free here but in some places they revolt over things that we're resigned to here, like privatisation and corrupt politicians. The international business elite are facing huge problems trying to force their horrible system on the world and the sooner we join in in the privileged countries, the sooner things will really get started.

If you're European, Middle-Eastern or Chinese, your ancestors have lived under civilisation for a lot of generations. It was a big shock for our ancestors to meet people who lived freely and happily without cities or technology. It is slowly awakening the hidden memories in our cultures that miss those days when we were pagans or animists not yet crushed by the advance of military civilisation.

ONE DAY WE WILL GARDEN HERE

Nothing lasts forever. There are already signs that our absurd civilisation is starting to fall apart. One day there will be gardens and forests where now there are concrete shopping centres and car parks. We can't go back to past times but we can create a future that has some of the good parts of those past times.

Here are a few pointers
towards good things I've come
across.

Media

news and info

www.engagemedia.org -
international

www.SchNEWS.org.uk - UK
based

www.indymedia.org - with local
sites

www.active.org.au - Sydney and
Melbourne

www.undercurrents.org - UK
radical news videos

www.infoshop.org

www.ainfos.ca

New Internationalist -
magazine and website

Third World resurgence

www.medialens.org

Economics

www.bilaterals.org

New Economics Foundation

Transnational Institute

Corporations

Corporate Watch

"The Corporation" - book, film
and website

www.spinwatch.org

www.sourcewatch.org

Groups

Anarchist Black Cross -
international prisoner support
group

National Aboriginal Alliance

Food Not Bombs

Faslane Peace Camp, anti-
nuclear site in Scotland

War Resisters International

www.noborders.org

Rising Tide

EZLN (The Zapatistas)

People's Global Action

North East Forest Alliance

Authors and other keywords to look for

Emma Goldman

Noam Chomsky

Arundhati Roy

Rosa Parks

Susan George

John Pilger

Black Mesa

Crimethinc

Climate Camp

Irati Wanti

Republic of Lakota

Fiction with attitude

"The Poisonwood Bible"

"V for Vendetta"

and books by

Ursula le Guin

Louis de Bernier

Marilyn French

Non-Fiction

Darwin's Nightmare - film

Guns, Germs and Steel - by

Jared Diamond

The Weathermakers - Tim

Flannery

The Fatal Shore - Robert

Hughes

More

www.Zmag.net

Black Rose Bookshop - in
Sydney

Jura Books - in Sydney

AK Press - USA and Scotland

CrimeThinc

**Everyone is a misfit in this world.
War is about greed and empire.
The government has no plan.
Supermarkets are nasty companies.
The USA opposes democracy.**



I haven't written long justifications for the ideas, I've just presented them. You might be pleased to find that other people think things that you've thought yourself. You might also find things you've never thought before. I put them all into one zine so you can see how they fit together into a world view.